

Funding For Summer and After-School Programs For Teens, Youth Announced

Summer Recreation, Work Readiness, STEM Programs Receive Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund Grants



Attorney General Matt Denn with Pastor Lottie Lee Davis and participants of the Be Ready Community Development Corp.

Summer and after-school programs for teenagers and youth will be up and running around Delaware in the next few months, thanks to more than \$900,000 in grants aimed at reducing crime and revitalizing neighborhoods.

Funds for the grants, announced Monday, were allocated to the Neighborhood Building Blocks Fund by the Department of Justice, with the agreement of the General Assembly's Joint

Finance Committee, from settlements with national banks for alleged misconduct in the national financial markets.

"It is not hard to see these days why it is important to provide young men and women with safe and productive activities, which is why I have been committed to get these programs up and running," said Attorney General Matt Denn, who proposed the allocation plan that included the NBBF. "The groups receiving these grants are part of the effort that we all have to make together to reduce crime and keep kids safe."

"Too often, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds make progress in school, only to lose ground once school lets out. The Neighborhood Building Blocks Grants will give teens up and down our state safe and secure places to learn and develop after school and during the summer," Gov. John Carney said at the event held at the H. Fletcher Brown Boys and Girls Clubs, one of the grant recipients. "Thank you to Attorney General Denn, the Joint Finance Committee, and the grant recipients for working to improve outcomes for Delaware teens."

Among the stated goals for the grants were addressing unmet needs of high crime areas statewide and improving resources and opportunities for at-risk juveniles and adolescents.

"The Neighborhood Building Blocks award has afforded Be Ready Community Development Corporation the opportunity to engage our youth in the important work of beautifying their own neighborhood," said Lottie Lee Davis of the Be Ready CDC, which received \$49,400 to provide stipends for youth who will work at neighborhood beautification and construction projects in the West Center City area of Wilmington. "The ability to change a blighted and unkempt area impacts the spirit and mindset of a community. We are teaching them to be leaders of change, one block at a time!"

The NBBF, which gave priority to smaller dollar requests,

awarded grants to:

- Latin American Community Center – \$5000 for a soccer league for 20 at-risk youth age 12-16 in Hilltop area of Wilmington
- YWCA of Delaware – \$17,589 for a Summer Internship Teen Empowerment program to provide exposure for youth with a number of major employers
- Jewish Family Services of Delaware – \$20,592 for Pre-Employment Training Services for at-risk youth in Wilmington
- FAME Inc. – \$25,000 for STEM education for students in grades 3-6 during out-of-school hours in Wilmington
- Western Family YMCA – \$30,470 for after school and community events for teens in Newark
- New Horizons Community Center – \$34,500 for martial arts and work readiness for juveniles and teens in Wilmington
- Dover YMCA – \$42,275 for its Young Men Mentoring Program for 30 boys age 10-15 on healthy lifestyles and employment skills training in Dover
- Dover Police – \$43,903 for basketball, flag football and hockey programs for Dover city youth
- Central YMCA – \$43,025 for a summer activity program for 75 teens in Wilmington
- Bear YMCA – \$45,080 for summer activities for 75 at-risk teens in Route 40 area
- Walnut Street YMCA – \$45,315 for teen engagement for 200 8th and 9th graders in Wilmington
- Delaware Nature Society – \$48,394 for an environmental after-school club for 30 students
- Be Ready Community Development Corp. – \$49,400 to provide stipends to 24 youth to engage in neighborhood beautification and construction projects in West Center City Wilmington
- Pathways of Delaware – \$81,986 for its Youth Health Ambassador Program to prevent youth delinquency
- Dover Housing Authority – \$136,500 to provide exercise

equipment at Simon Circle community center staffed by military and police volunteers

- Boys and Girls Club – \$250,000 for summer and after-school activities for approximately 1000 teens in 5 locations: Wilmington (2 sites), Dover, Milford and Seaford

Some of the funded youth programs will be up and running this summer and some will begin in the next school year.

Grant applications were taken in December 2016, after a series of public meetings across the statewide allowing comment on needs that could be met with the NBBF funding. A board – including representatives of the Delaware Economic Development Office, Department of Justice, Delaware State Housing Authority, Office of State Planning, and former Wilmington Mayor James Sills as a public representative – considered the applications and awarded the grants this spring.

NBBF is also in the process of making grants in the areas of neighborhood improvement, including vacant lot projects; lights and façade improvements; public safety and recidivism activities, including programs for released inmates, surveillance cameras, and safety courses; and downtown district planning activities in cities and towns throughout Delaware.